

A ROUND ROBIN

THE BOOK OF LIFE

A PAGEANT OF THE CHURCH

BY

ELSIE DOUGLAS

CHURCH MISSIONS PUBLISHING CO.

211 STATE STREET, HARTFORD, CONN.

Publication No. 108

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DEDICATED

To the boys of my class and
other members of

SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH SCHOOL
CHESTNUT HILL, PA.

Who first presented this Pageant

That the words which they have here
said and sung with their lips, they may believe
in their hearts and practice in their
lives, to the end that through them

"THE BOOK OF LIFE"

may be carried throughout the World:

is the constant prayer of
their friend

ELSIE DOUGLAS

Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pa.
Easter, 1917

INTRODUCTION

This Pageant of the Church and the Indians is based upon history. In 1832 three Indians of the Nez Perces' came to St. Louis asking for General Clark, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and said they had come to find the "White man's Book of Life." They were kindly received by the General and taken care of by the citizens of St. Louis. Before they could be sent back two of them died and the third went home alone. The speech which he made when he bade farewell to General Clark is the speech we have here used. (See "Followers of the Trail" by Sarah Lowrie. Church Missions Publishing Company.) History tells us that these last words of this broken hearted Indian, sent East in a letter, were read by Marcus Whitman, a young physician, who afterward took to them the "Book of Life." He was the first man to take a wagon across the Rockies, as Mrs. Whitman was the first woman to cross the great mountains. He, it was, who by his wonderful ride alone in the dead of winter from the North West Territory to Washington, D.C., saved that great country to the United States.

The Symbolism we have here used of the Indians' cry for help being heard by a Priest who carries Mother Church with Her Sacraments to them has had ample fulfillment in the history of our land. The Christian Indians who, having received the "Words of Life," are carrying abroad the Light of the Gospel, are among the greatest blessings which the Church has received in the New World.

The Pageant was first given in St. Paul's Church, Chestnut Hill, Phila., Pa. where the memory of Bishop Hare, the Church's great Apostle to the Indians, and one of our early rectors, is a living influence and inspiration to all who share in the parish life.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

- CHIEF, *Blanket. Beads. Chief's head dress. Make this by sewing feathers upright in a band of red flannel, decorating with beads, and painting ends of feathers black. Carries Pipe of Peace.*
- WARRIOR, *Blanket. Head-band of red with two feathers. Carries a gun and pack in second and third scenes.*
- SQUAWS, *Dressed in Camp-fire ceremonial dress. Beads, head-bands, etc. but no feathers. (Indian women never wear feathers.)*
- GENERAL CLARK, *Uniform of U. S. Army officer of 1832, if possible. Any military uniform will do.*
- PRIEST, *Cassock. Large silver Cross. Clerical collar. Carries Bible in last scene.*
- MOTHER CHURCH, *Long flowing white robe with loose sleeves. Silvered Helmet, and sword made in form of Cross. Have this made of wood and painted with silver paint.*
- EUCARIST, *Vested in choir vestments. Carries two brass candle-sticks with lighted candles.*
- BAPTISM, *Short sleeveless white dress (made of cheese-cloth) large silver cross, flowing white veil, if possible, carries silver bowl.*
- CRUCIFER, *Vested in choir vestments. Carries processional Cross.*

INDIAN BRAVES *Blankets, Indian if possible. The more red in the make-up of the Indians the better. Head-bands can be made of red flannel, buy feathers from a wholesale millinery house for \$1.00 a gross and put one or more in each band. They carry guns or any other Indian objects obtainable. The Peace-pipe is important and, if a real one cannot be secured, should be made bright with feathers and red flannel.*

SQUAWS, *Camp-fire dress made of brown muslin, or khaki, cut with short loose sleeves, skirt rather short. As many beads as possible should be worn with bright head-bands and hair either loose or plaited.*

CAMP-FIRE, *For the Ceremonial lighting of the fire in the first scene the fire should be laid of logs, with if possible an electric torch under the logs. The three candle-sticks which are lighted by the three Squaws placed in front of the logs. When the curtain rises the Chief holds a lighted taper and hands it to the first girl who lights her candle and hands it to the next, the last one turning on the electric light. In the last scene it is not necessary to have the candles.*

NOTE — *While this play calls for at least 15 boys and 2 girls, all these parts can be taken if necessary, or desired, by boys, or entirely, or in larger part by girls, the taller in the company playing the parts of the men.*

Thanks are due the Camp-fire Girls of America for permission to publish their Fire-lighting Ceremony, and the "Ode to the Fire."

THE BOOK OF LIFE

A Pageant of the Church

PROLOGUE (from Hiawatha).

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple.
Who have faith in God and nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human;
That in even savage bosoms
There are longing, yearnings, strivings,
For the Good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in the darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened;—
Listen to this simple story.

SCENE I.

*A CAMP FIRE. Men in the background.
Women in semi-circle around the unlighted fire.*

*The CHIEF hands a lighted torch to a SQUAW
who lights one light of fire. She hands it to next
and she to next, using the Fire Ceremonial of the
Camp-fire Girls.*

FIRST SQUAW. (Drops on one knee and lights candle.)

I light the light of Work, for Wohelo means Work.

We glorify Work, because through work
we are free. We work to win,
to conquer, to be masters.

We work for the joy of working,
and because we are free.

Wohelo means WORK.

SECOND SQUAW.

I light the light of Health, for Wohelo means Health.

We hold on to health, because
through health we serve and are
happy. In caring for the health and
beauty of our persons we are
caring for the very shrine of the
Great Spirit.

Wohelo means HEALTH.

THIRD SQUAW.

I light the light of Love, for Wohelo means Love.

We love love, for love is life
and light and joy and sweetness.

And love is comradeship, and motherhood,
and fatherhood, and all dear kinship.

Love is the joy of service so deep
that self is forgotten.
Wohelo means LOVE.

*ALL TOGETHER. (Stretching out arms over
the fire in the pose of worship.)*

O Fire !

Long years ago when our fathers fought the
great animals you were their protection.
From the cruel cold of winter you saved them.
When they needed food you changed the
flesh of beasts into savory meat for them.
During all the ages your mysterious flame
has been a symbol to them for Spirit.
So to-night we light our fire in remembrance
of the Great Spirit who gave you to us.

*Women step back, and men passing through
their line sit about the lighted fire. Women
stand. Men pass about the Pipe of Peace,
each taking a puff.*

CHIEF. O my brothers of the council,
We whose fathers owned this great land,
We who roaming free and happy
Hunted for the deer and bison,
Hunted bear and elk and panther;
Now are being slowly driven
Back, back, back into the forest.

All our hunting grounds are taken.
All our haunts where once we wandered.
And my children, we are dying,
Dying are we by the thousands,
For we have no hope within us;
For these strangers, now our conquerors,
Want our land, our game, our rivers,
Want to kill us and possess them.
Tell me, brothers of the Council,
Tell me what will happen to us?
I am old and much disheartened,
There is no more hope left in me.
We are dying, O my people,
Dying in this land of plenty;
Is there none to save my people?
Save my people e're they perish?

WARRIOR.

I have had a legend told me
Of a Book the white man keepeth,
Of a "Book of Life" the white man
Has, which taken to a people
Who are dying, just as we are,
Brings them Life again, and makes them
Staunch, and strong, and brave, and
fearless;
Overcometh death and terror,
Gives them life again, my brothers.

CHIEF.

Go and find this Book, O Warrior,
Take with you two staunch companions,
Take them quickly o'er the mountains
To the white man's camp, and find there
The Great Chief of all the white men;
Bring the "Book of Life" back with you,
Bring it back to save my people,
Bring it — let's have no delaying.

PEOPLE.

We are dying, dying, dying.
Bring the "Book of Life" back to us.—
[Drum]

WARRIOR.

I will go at once, my people.
Choose two old men to go with me.
You and you will I take with me, (*points
to two of the men*)
For the white men will respect you,
Treat your aged heads with honor.
And, my people, we would ask you
To beseech the Good Great Spirit,
Gitchi Manitou, the Mighty,
That he speed us on our journey
Over wood, and plain, and river,
To the white man's wigwam city,
Where we'll find Life for our people.
Men slowly file out.

SQUAW.

O, ye women of the council,
Let us ask the Good Great Spirit,
Gitchi Manitou, the Mighty,
That he bless them on their journey,
Send them safely on their journey,
Bring them to the white man's city,
Where the "Book of Life" is waiting.
For our people here are dying,
Dying, dying in the darkness.
And our little children, dying,
Stretch forth hands so weak and groping,
Stretch forth trembling hands towards us,
And we have no Life to give them.

Curtain

SCENE II.

GENERAL CLARK. (Sitting at a table writing.) Enter the Warrior, with his pack on his back and his gun ready to depart for his long trail home. They make the "fire-sign".)

GENERAL. I am glad, my dear red brother, that you came in search of me, for I love your people, and right gladly would I serve them.

But my heart aches for you, that I must send you back among them without the "Book of Life" which you seek. It is here, but, alas, it is not in the Indian tongue and your people cannot read English, — and there is no white man to take it to you. So I must send you back the long trail alone, for your comrades, the old men we so gladly honored, rest here in their graves beside the Great River.

WARRIOR. I came to you over a Trail of many moons from the setting sun. You were the friend of my fathers who have all gone the long way. I came with one eye partially opened for more light for my people who sit in darkness. I go back with both eyes closed. How can I go back to my blind people? I made my way to you with strong arms, through many enemies and strange lands, that I might carry back much to them. I go back with both arms broken and empty. The two fathers who came with me — the braves of many winters and wars — we leave asleep here by the Great Water. They were tired in many moons and their moccasins wore out. My people sent me to get the white man's "Book of Heaven". You took me to where you allow your women to dance as we do ours, and the Book was not there. You took

me to where you worship the Great Spirit with candles, and the Book was not there. You showed me images of good spirits, and pictures of the good land beyond, but the Book was not among them. I am going back the long trail to my people. You make my feet heavy with the burden of gifts, and my moccasins will grow old carrying them, but the Book is not among them. When I tell my poor blind people in the big council that I did not bring the Book, no word will be spoken by the old men or the young braves, one by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in the darkness, and go out to the hunting grounds. No white man will go with them and no white man's Book to make the way plain. I have no more words.

GENERAL. Good-bye, perhaps some day we will be able to send the Book of Life to your people, but alas, not now.

Exit WARRIOR.

Curtain

SCENE III.

A young priest sits reading a letter. To one side is a prayer desk

PRIEST. reading. "A wonderful thing has happened. Three Indians, ragged and weary with the moccasins nearly off their feet from the long trail, came to our town some months since and said they were looking for the 'White Man's Book of Life'. We cared for them, and they spent the winter with us. Two of them, old men, could not stand the long journey and died, but the third went back to his people loaded with gifts. These were his last words to General Clark:

'My people sent me to get the white man's Book of Heaven. You took me to where you allow your women to dance as we do ours, but the Book was not there. You took me to where they worship the Great Spirit with candles, but the Book was not there. You make my feet heavy with the burden of gifts, but the Book is not among them. My people will die in the darkness. No white man will go with them and no white man's Book will show them the way.'

My heart aches for these people. I pray daily that God will raise up some one to take the Gospel and the Church to these dying Indians."

PRIEST. (Speaking.) "My feet are heavy with the burden, but the Book is not there! — My people will die in the darkness. — No white man will go to them! — No white man's Book will make the way plain!"

These people want the Bible! — They are dying! — They want a *man* to take to them "The Words of Life." "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be *sent*." Some one must *be sent* before they may have the Bible and the Church! I will pray that a man be found to go. (*Kneels in silence.*)

Enter MOTHER CHURCH, preceded by CRUCIFER, BAPTISM, and HOLY EUCHARIST, in background.

MOTHER CHURCH. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Whoso believeth in me shall never die. If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto Me."

To His Disciples He said, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you. Go ye therefore, and preach the Gospel, baptizing in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

PRIEST. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" . . . You . . . Not some one else. *GO YE!!! (Jumping to his feet)* He wants *Me* to go . . . *I*, a Priest of His Church. *I* to minister His Sacraments, and teach His people.

O Mother Church, I hear the Master's call; He would have *Me* to take Holy Church with His Sacraments of Grace to these people who are in darkness and the shadow of death.

Come, Holy Mother. Without human hands His messages of grace are of none avail. Bring Baptism and Holy Eucharist and I will lead you forth to carry the Good News to these 'God's people' who sit in darkness waiting for the Light.

Tableau. *PRIEST* takes *MOTHER CHURCH* by the hand, preceded by *CRUCIFER* and followed by *BAPTISM* and *HOLY EUCHARIST*.

SCENE IV.

Council fire as before. All sit in gloomy silence, waiting, a moaning sound passes through the waiting people with occasionally the deep note of a drum.

CHIEF. Our brothers have been gone these many moons and no word has come from them. If they come not soon we will perish for our strength is departing.

All lament. Drum sounds.

SQUAW. (*Looking out.*) Afar over the mountains I see a lonely figure. He is bending beneath a heavy burden and walks as one weary. Can it be? My brothers it is our WARRIOR, but where are his companions, and why comes he alone? His back is bent, is it the BOOK that he brings?

All look.

WARRIOR. Many moons have I travelled to the white man's wigwam city but the Book was not there. The white man's Chief was kind to me; I have come home laden with gifts to you, my people, but the Book is not among them. Here we must die together for we may

not have the "Words of Life," there is no man to bring them.

Silence. Slowly one by one the men rise and go out. Curtain closes and opens again immediately.

SQUAW. What is this I see? A Light? Some one comes. My Brothers his companion bears a Cross. He carries a BOOK. Oh, wait ye here for he holds out friendly hands, and a wondrous light shines in his face.

Enter PRIEST. MOTHER CHURCH, attended by CRUCIFER, BAPTISM and HOLY EUCHARIST, in the background.

PRIEST. In his right hand he carries the Bible, and holds it out as he speaks.

Behold I come to bring you tidings of great joy. Here is the Book of the "Words of Life" which holds all things needful to your salvation. This is the Good Tidings that I bring to you that ye may live and not die. That unto you is born Christ Jesus, our Lord. He has sent me in His Name to preach unto you His Gospel, and bring you Holy MOTHER CHURCH, who will make you one with Him, that through Jesus Christ, who was Crucified, and rose again,

and ascended into Heaven, ye may have eternal Life.

People fall on their knees, lifting up hands toward MOTHER CHURCH, who takes centre of stage, and PRIEST standing beside Her.

MOTHER CHURCH. (Stretching out her hand over kneeling people.) Jesus said "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. No man liveth but by Me, and whoso liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Believe ye this?

PEOPLE. We believe.

MOTHER CHURCH. I have brought you Holy Sacraments, without which ye cannot have grace. Receive ye HOLY BAPTISM.

HOLY BAPTISM. I am Holy Baptism; through me ye are washed of your sins and made living members of Christ's Body the Church. Upon your foreheads I place His sign, the Cross, in token whereof ye are to fight under His banner, and become His faithful soldiers and servants unto your life's end.

MOTHER CHURCH. Without food ye can in nowise live. Here is HOLY EUCHARIST, who brings you the Sacrament which Christ Himself ordained that His Body might be fed.

HOLY EUCHARIST. I am Holy Eucharist. As ye can in nowise live unless your bodies receive food, so must your spiritual lives receive the Body and Blood of Christ. To this end he ordained Holy Eucharist, and on the last night, breaking bread and giving wine before them, gave unto His disciples his Body and Blood, commanding that they show forth the Lord's death till He come.

MOTHER CHURCH. You did Christ make alive when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins. Ye were separate from Him, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that were far off are made nigh in His blood. For this cause, pray ye, that ye may comprehend with all the Saints what is the breadth and depth and length and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

Take ye therefore the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and with all prayer, and supplication

and watching go ye forth to fight as His soldiers unto Life eternal.

PRIEST. (*Standing with outstretched hands, beside MOTHER CHURCH.*)

Peace be with you, Brethern, and Love and Faith from Him who has brought us from darkness into His marvellous Light.

He kneels. MOTHER CHURCH standing in centre with CRUCIFER behind her and holding the Cross above her head. BAPTISM and EUCHARIST on either side. Indians grouped, all kneeling, form tableau.)

Congregation join all in singing 1st verse of Hymn 274.

"O Word of God Incarnate"

In place of EPILOGUE. Benediction, pronounced by a Priest in the Audience.

CURTAIN

